CHILDREN'S BOOK
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LOS ANGELES

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Bernard M. Meeks

FRONTISPIECE.

Whilst each flowing Sylphide, its homage expreſsid." p. 10.

FLORA'S GALA.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.

From Giant Oaks that wave their branches dark,
To the dwarf Moss that clings upon their bark,
What Beaux and Beauties crowd the gaudy groves,
And woo and win their vegetable loves.

DARWIN'S BOTANIC GARDEN.

LONDON:

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1808.

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars.

FLORA'S GALA.

GAY *Flora*, by numerous Fairies attended,
Who, Children and Maidens have often befriended,
Resolv'd, on a beautiful morning in May,
To amuse her blithe train with a grand Gala-day.
She therefore directed her Sylphs to convene
Ev'ry Flower which sports its gay form on the Green,
With those from the Gardens and Mountains and Groves,
To dance with the Graces, and play with the Loves:

And appointed the place for her splendid Review
At the *Royal Botanical Garden* at KEW.

The Sylphs and the Fairies, the Fays and the Elves,
Whom the Poets say somewhat resemble ourselves;
And the Gnomes, who they tell us are ugly form'd creatures,
Unlike human beings, in voices and features,
Were created by fancy and form'd in the mind,
And therefore were never yet seen by mankind.

The Sylphs guard the beautiful, sweet-scented Flowers,
Which chiefly delight in the Gardens and Bowers;
And each, as transparent as chrystalline spar,
Floats, sweetly perfum'd, in a Soap Bubble Car;

Delighted to please, while they fan the rich gales,
Diffusing the fragrance which Flora exhales.
But the Gnomes have a different task to perform,
In a Chariot of Cobweb they ride on the Storm;
And, perching on poisonous Flowers and Trees,
With their noxious Effluvia envenom the Breeze.

Now on this grand occasion, 'twas Flora's desire,
Each Fairy should put on her gayest attire,
And convey to the elegant Garden at KEW,
Ev'ry Plant which Dame Nature exhibits to view.

The Sylphs rang'd the Flow'rs in their natural order,
For some chose a Bed, and for others a Border;

For many, a Hot-house, for some few a Wall,
But they found it a difficult task to please *all.*
Those plants which live best in the tropical climes,
Such as PINE-APPLES, ORANGES, MELONS and LIMES;
With a great many more who inhabit such places,
Were fearful of cold and conceal'd their sweet faces;
Whilst others, from Iceland complain'd of the heat,
And requested to stand in the coldest retreat.
But Flora, it seems, had directed this day,
Each Sylph and each Fairy, each Gnome, Elf, and Fay,
To adopt the arrangements *Linneus* design'd,
When science adorn'd his botanical mind.—

O'er the *Classes**, just twenty-five kings were ordain'd,
Who govern'd their subjects, and happily reign'd.
But the OAK of *Britannia*, sweet *Flora* decreed,
Should throughout the Creation all others precede;
His mandates she order'd the World to obey,
And as chief in command, to acknowledge his sway.
Those *Classes*, *Linneus* again subdivided,
And a Viceroy, o'er each of the *Orders*† presided.

* Linneus, the great Swedish naturalist, arranged the Plants into twenty-five Classes; which are chiefly distinguishable by the number or situation of the *stamina*, or male parts of the Flowers.

† The *Classes*, according to the Linnean system, are divided into 120 *Orders*.

As next in Commission, one thousand eight hundred
Great *Generals* * *rank'd*, who ne'er fought nor e'er plunder'd ;
Twenty Thousand brave Captains, the *Species* † controul,
And *Varieties* endless embellish the whole.

Each tint of the Rainbow illumin'd the scene,
Whilst the beauties of Nature enamel'd the green,
When *Flora*, sweet Goddess! had taken her station,
Surveying with rapture her fragrant Creation :

* The *Orders* are divided into 1800 *Genera* or *Families*.

† The *Genera* are again subdivided into 20,000 different *Species*, which are composed of innumerable *Varieties* depending on their Colour, Size, &c.

Her head was adorn'd with a Garland of Roses,
Her vesture embellish'd with beautiful Posies:
Surrounded by hosts of her filmy-wing'd Choir,
Some of whom swept the strings of the silver-ton'd Lyre,
And others melodiously tun'd the soft Lute,
The Organ, the Trumpet, the Horn and the Flute;
Whilst the Minuet, the Reel, the Cotillon and Hey,
Were most gracefully danc'd by each Fairy and Fay;
Blithe *Zephyrus* * gently saluted the *Fair*,
And wafted her Mantle on Pinions of Air.

* *Zephyrus*, in fabulous history, means the gentle West Wind personified, who is said to have been passionately in love with the Goddess *Flora*.

Now *Flora* commanded each Flower which blows,
Ev'ry delicate charm it possess'd to disclose:
Whilst each flow'ry Sylphite its homage express'd,
And presented the Casket of Sweets it possess'd,
Enclos'd in a beautiful Globule of Dew,
Such as never was offer'd by mortals to view.

These reciprocal compliments pass'd in rotation,
Till *Ariel*, chief of the Sylphic Creation,
Presented to *Flora* a beautiful *Rose*,
Which its opening riches began to disclose;
But a mischievous Gnome, by invisible power,
A Bee had conceal'd in the delicate Flower;

"Presented to Miss ——— a beautiful Rose."

P. 12.

Which the Goddess unthinkingly plac'd on her breast,
Whose sweetness attracted the Bee from his Nest;
And whilst on her beautiful Bosom reclin'd,
He stole all its Sweets, and his Sting left behind.
However, it only occasion'd a smart,
Which was heal'd by a slight application of Art;
And *Ariel* shortly replenish'd her store,
With the *Otto* of Roses from *Indus'* fam'd shore;
Whilst all the sweet odours produc'd in each clime,
Were procur'd by the Sylphs in an instant of time.
Though the Gnomes, spiteful creatures! her anguish enjoy'd,
And wish'd that the Bee had her beauty destroy'd.

But soon the fell Robber was punish'd severely,
For *Flora* well knew what the rascal lov'd dearly,
And order'd the *Catch-fly* * to lure with its charms,
The traitorous thief to its honey-dew'd arms;
And there that the little intruder should dwell,
Imprison'd for life in his delicate cell.

These scenes being over, a SNOW-DROP advanc'd,
And with ye'low NARCISSUS delightfully danc'd.

* One of the species of *Silene*, or *Catch-fly*, called *Dionæa Muscipula*, or Venus's Catch fly, has a most curious contrivance to prevent the depredations of Insects. The leaves are armed with long teeth, like the *Antennæ* of Insects, which lie spread upon the ground round the stem, and are so irritable that when an insect creeps upon them, they fold up and crush or pierce it to death.

"Shut out the cruel fly, or have with its cursed race."

"A Hyacinth, graced with an elegant stalk." p. 13.

A CROCUS appear'd in a rich golden Vest,
With a fine DOUBLE WALL, who was sanguinely dress'd.
A HYACINTH, grac'd with an elegant stalk,
Invited the TULIP, a Minuet to walk.
The PINK follow'd after, and then the CARNATION,
And little SWEET-WILLIAM was next in rotation.
The DAISY, CONVOLVOLUS, LUPIN and PANSY,
Or HEART'S EASE, the name which best pleases my fancy,
Danc'd a four-handed Reel to a lively Scotch Air,
Whilst the sweet MIGNIONETTE swam on pinions of Air.
The PINE-APPLE, BALSAM, GERANIUM, and others,
Who live in a hot-house as friendly as brothers,

Accepted gay *Flora's* polite invitation,

And ventur'd to step from their dignified station,

To dance with the COWSLIP, and play with the HEATH,

And adorn the rich circuit in *Flora*'s gay wreath.

The JESSAMINE, HOLLYHOCK, WOODBINE and PEA,

The SUN-FLOW'R, LABURNUM, and MULBERRY-TREE,

With the ROSE, danc'd Cotillons,—their pleasure express'd,

And in natural beauty were sumptuously dress'd.

A Hornpipe, sweet COLUMBINE danc'd in the air,

And of sylphic applause, she obtain'd her due share:

Whilst MUSHROOMS and MOSSES the company grac'd,

And CATCH-FLY as guard of the Honey was plac'd.

"A Mistress, armed & disarmed, or the cruel Fair." Pub.

From Nature's grand Storehouse, their viands they drew,
And moisten'd their lips with libations of Dew.

But if I recounted each Flower by name,
Which either from Asia or Africa came;
From the New Southern Islands, or vast Western World,
Where first great *Columbus* his banners unfurl'd;
And describ'd ev'ry beauty of all the gay Flowers,
'Twould engage the attention a great many hours.
My history therefore, I soon must conclude,
And on these precious moments no longer intrude;
But only inform you, 'twas *Flora's* desire,
When Ev'ning suggested 'twas time to retire,

That each would go peaceably home to its bed,

And rest until Morning its delicate head.

Then, conceal'd in a cloud, the sweet Goddess withdrew,

And bade all her subjects a tender Adieu!

THE END.

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars.

Pyramus and Thisbe, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book IV.